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PREPARATIONS FOR THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN: ACTION FOR EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The Commission on the Status of Women, at its thirty-sixth session, requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its thirty-seventh session on preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace. The present report describes progress in preparations at the national, regional and international levels, including those of non-governmental organizations.

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INTRODUCTION

1. At its thirty-sixth session, the Commission on the Status of Women, in its resolution 36/8 C, referred to a report that the Secretary-General would be preparing on preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace. Accordingly, the present report not only contains information on the status of preparations being undertaken at the national, regional and international levels of which the Secretariat has been apprised, but also information on activities undertaken by non-governmental organizations. A calendar of events for 1993 and 1994 is provided in the annex.

2. Since only information that had been received by the Secretariat prior to 4 December 1992 has been included in the present report, additional information may be made available for the consideration of the Commission at its thirty-seventh session.

I. PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES

A. National level

3. In accordance with Commission resolution 36/8 B, the Secretary-General sent a note verbale to all Member States and permanent observers in August 1992 informing them of the recommendation in paragraph 2 of resolution 36/8 B, that Governments establish a national committee or designate a national focal point to initiate and promote preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women. The Secretariat has been informed of nine such focal points or national committees having been established. While in several cases, the national machinery and its head have been designated as national committee and focal point, respectively, some countries have established new committees, which include national machinery representatives as well as those of other governmental bodies and non-governmental organizations. As national preparations are an integral part of the Fourth World Conference, it is of vital importance that activities to gather information on priority issues in each country are initiated on an urgent basis so that results can be fed into the regional preparatory conferences scheduled to be held in 1994. Accordingly, as soon as they are received, the addresses of national committees and focal points are being provided, on request, to various institutions, including potential donors. Attention is drawn to chapter II of the present report. The addresses will also be listed in the biannual publication entitled Conference 95.

B. Host country

4. The newly established China Organizing Committee for the Fourth World Conference on Women has been assigned the responsibility and task of coordinating all the bodies and each item connected to the entire preparatory work for the Fourth World Conference. Under the leadership of the State Council, the organizing members of the Committee have been drawn from 30 organs, 26 of which are ministries and state commissions. The Committee has five functional commissions: the Commission for Organization and Liaison Work; the Commission for Public Information; the Commission for Organizing the Non-Governmental Organizations' Forum; the Commission for Financial and Administrative Work; and the Commission for Safety and Security.

5. At the Interregional Workshop on the Role of Women in Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development, held in Beijing, 9-15 September 1992, informal discussions were held between a representative of the secretariat of the Conference and the organizers in the host country.

C. Regional level

6. Regional activities are being initiated and coordinated by the regional commissions, most of which have held, or plan to hold, regional inter-agency meetings. While the importance of the contribution of other organizations of the United Nations system at the regional level is recognized, their activities are described under section C, "International level", below.

1. Africa

7. Under the auspices of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Fifth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in Development, which will also be a regional preparatory activity for the Fourth World Conference, is likely to be held at Dakar in September and October 1994. The venue and exact dates, however, have yet to be confirmed with the host Government.

8. Preparations for the Regional Conference will include the convening of two expert group meetings. The first will be held at Addis Ababa in May 1993, and the second one is proposed to be held in Tunisia in February or May 1994, pending agreement with the proposed host Government.

9. At the first expert group meeting of regional experts on women in development (WID), selected Government officials and African women journalists will be expected:

(a) To devise and prepare a draft plan of action for the advancement of women in Africa;

(b) To review and adopt the draft agenda for the Regional Conference, and agree on a theme for it that will focus on areas such as women in decision- and policy-making, women entrepreneurship, gender aspects of environmental and development problems, the role of national machinery in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women 1/ and preparations for the Fourth World Conference;

(c) To prepare guidelines on measures to be taken in reviewing the Forward-looking Strategies, in order to take stock thoroughly of their implementation within the African region;

(d) To use the meeting as a forum to launch a special contest for the best investigative reporting on women's issues in the African media. African media will report on the progress made in African programmes at the national level in reaching targets set by the Forward-looking Strategies. A special overview report will be compiled indicating public views and perspectives on women's issues in Africa;

(e) To discuss the preparation of documents for the Fourth World Conference, as well as national reports reviewing the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies.

10. The second expert group meeting, incorporating a Round-Table Encounter with the African press, is intended:

(a) To finalize the plan of action and adopt an African agenda;

(b) To make plans for an exhibition of materials, publications and statistical data reflecting activities and progress made in the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies.

11. In addition to the two expert group meetings, the African Training and Research Centre for Women (ATRCW) of ECA will hold its annual meeting with the African Regional Coordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development (ARCC). The meeting, which will be held at Harare in April 1993, will have the preparation for the Regional Conference on its agenda. ARCC, which is a subsidiary organ of ECA, will draw up a plan for the preparation of the Regional Conference, including activities to be undertaken by the regional and subregional coordinating committees. The recommendations of ARCC will be presented to the ECA Conference of African Ministers that will also meet at Harara in April. ECA intends to hold a regional inter-agency meeting in May 1993.

2. Asia and the Pacific

12. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) convened an inter-agency meeting at Bangkok on 10 September 1992 on preparations for the Regional Ministerial Conference on Women in Development, which is to be held in Indonesia in May 1994 as a regional preparatory activity for the Fourth World Conference. The agencies represented at the meeting, at which non-governmental organizations were represented, pledged full support and cooperation in the preparations at both the regional and national levels. The regional conference will consist of a five-day meeting of senior officials to review and appraise the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies in the ESCAP region immediately followed by the two-day Ministerial Conference.

13. The meeting of senior officials will be devoted primarily to:

(a) A review and appraisal of the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies in the region;

(b) The formulation of a plan of action to advance the status of women in Asia and the Pacific, in keeping with the aims and objectives of the Forward-looking Strategies.

14. At the Ministerial Conference, the ministers responsible for the advancement of women in the ESCAP region will present their views on the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies in the region from the point of view of their national experience. On the basis of that exchange of views, the ministers will then consider for adoption a plan of action for the advancement of women in the ESCAP region in line with the aims and objectives of the Forward-looking Strategies.

15. Both the meeting of senior officials and the Ministerial Conference will focus on the following three major areas of concern:

(a) Women in economic development. Although women contribute significantly to development in all economic sectors throughout the ESCAP

region, women's work is generally invisible, undervalued and thus underrepresented in national accounts. Furthermore, despite the contribution of women to economic development, their concerns are not adequately reflected in development policies, plans and programmes. At the same time, women throughout the region do not benefit from economic development on an equal basis with men. Of particular importance is the fact that women have yet to be integrated into all occupations and economic sectors and to obtain conditions of work comparable with those of men. In virtually all countries and areas of the region, women on average earn far less than men. Women are typically employed at the bottom rung of the career ladder without hope of significant advancement. Owing to such circumstances, women generally remain poorly represented in economic decision-making positions;

(b) Women in social development. Gender disparities in social conditions are strikingly evident throughout the region. In most countries of the region, many more women than men are illiterate, far fewer girls than boys are enrolled in all levels of education, and far more girls than boys drop out of formal education. Women generally have less access to vocational training. Similarly, girls and women have less access to health care than boys and men, and such health care as they do receive is restricted largely to their reproductive needs. In many countries, discrimination against girls and women in favour of men is evident in the lower life expectancy rates of women, the high maternal mortality rates, the higher infant mortality rates of girls, and the higher incidence of malnutrition among girls and women. In addition to their economic contribution to the household, women generally are expected to take the main responsibility for the welfare of their families, leaving them little time for education, political participation and leisure. The gender-biased use of time within the household, as well as trends with respect to female-headed households, marital dissolution, migration and the distribution of income, resources and welfare, call for an examination of traditional concepts of the family and gender roles.

(c) Women and empowerment. Women's legal status throughout the ESCAP region is not equal to that of men, as discriminatory legislation in the social, economic and political spheres continues to exist, including provisions in the civil, penal and commercial codes and various administrative rules and regulations. Furthermore, gaps persist between legal provisions regarding the rights of women and the full realization of those rights in daily life, owing to customary discriminatory practices and the entrenched opposition of a male-oriented society. In its most virulent form, discrimination is manifested in violence against women, various forms of which have traditionally been perpetrated widely throughout the region. In recent years, violence against women, such as domestic violence, rape, forced prostitution and trafficking in women, has become more prevalent in many countries of the region.

3. Europe

16. The Economic Commission for Europe has not yet received a mandate to convene a regional preparatory conference.

4. Latin America and the Caribbean

17. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) held a Meeting of Specialized Agencies and Other Bodies of the United Nations System on Future Activities to Promote the Integration of Women into Latin

American and Caribbean Development in Preparation for the Fourth World Conference on Women at Santiago on 3 and 4 September 1992. The Meeting agreed to prepare a joint publication for the Sixth Regional Conference, to be held in Argentina in 1994, on the progress made towards achieving gender equity in the region in various areas affecting women. It was also agreed as part of the preparations for the Regional Conference and the Fourth World Conference that seminars should be organized in each country to analyse the first draft of the publication prepared by the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system. In addition to fostering gender equity at the regional level, the seminars should provide an opportunity to update information on the situation of women in the countries for inclusion in the final version of the joint publication. A working group consisting of representatives of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) was formed to take charge of compiling information on gender-training activities in the region. The initial compilation will be presented to the Meeting of Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference at Santiago in November 1993.

18. ECLAC held an expert group meeting at Mexico City from 26 to 28 October 1992 to begin elaborating a new regional plan of action for women in Latin America and the Caribbean. That meeting narrowed the focus of regional preparations to the umbrella heading of "sharing of power for a better society". Afterwards the Fifteenth Meeting of Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean was held on 29 and 30 October 1992.

5. Western Asia

19. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) plans to hold its Regional Preparatory Conference in November 1994. At its sixteenth session, held from 30 August to 3 September 1992, ESCWA adopted a resolution on preparations for the Fourth World Conference, which stressed the need to strengthen national and regional institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women and appealed to States members of the Commission as well as to regional and international donors to provide financial and other support for the convening of the Regional Preparatory Conference. An expert group meeting, which will elaborate a regional plan of action, is planned for the end of 1993.

D. International level

20. Since the last session of the Commission, preparations for the Fourth World Conference have been discussed by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session in 1992 and by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. By its decision 1992/272, the Council took note of Commission resolution 36/8 on preparations for the Fourth World Conference and endorsed the recommendations contained therein. This decision was endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 47/95 on the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies, which also expressed the Assembly's appreciation to the Chinese Government for its offer to act as host for the World Conference on Women to be held in Beijing from 4 to 15 September 1995.

21. In December 1992, the Secretary-General of the United Nations appointed Gertrude Mongella of the United Republic of Tanzania as Secretary-General of the Fourth World Conference. He also announced that the secretariat arrangements for the Conference would be within the purview of the new Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development.

22. Increasing importance is being placed on inter-agency collaboration at the national, regional and international levels in general as well as in sectoral activities in particular. For example, the Global Programme on AIDS and the Safe Motherhood Initiative will certainly have an impact on the Fourth World Conference and a system-wide position paper on women, drug abuse and drug control is being planned in preparation for it.

23. The monitoring group on the second edition of The World's Women: Trends and Statistics, which is to be included in the documentation for the Fourth World Conference, met in New York on 19 October 1992. The group consisted of representatives of the United Nations Secretariat, namely, the Division for the Advancement of Women, the Department of Public Information, the Publishing Division and the Department of Economic and Social Development; and of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), UNIFEM and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women. Presided over by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat, the group agreed on the broad outlines of the second edition, as well as its timing and financing.

24. Another example of inter-agency collaboration is the preparation of the 1994 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development, information on which is contained in a separate report that is before the Commission.

25. The Commission, in its resolution 35/4, requested the Secretary-General to submit to it, at its thirty-seventh session, a report on existing technical and financial cooperation targeting programmes in favour of women, as well as guidelines for a comprehensive plan to overcome constraints and to increase such cooperation. In view of the widespread changes taking place within the United Nations secretariat as well as the system as a whole, the view of the organizational entities and bodies that were to be involved in the preparation of such a report was to postpone its preparation so that it could be considered by the Commission at its thirty-eighth session. Steps were taken at the informal inter-agency consultation, held at Vienna, 13 and 16 November 1992, to entrust the preparation of the first draft to the organizations most concerned with operational activities.

26. The regular inter-agency meetings on women held every year prior to the Commission are concentrating on preparations for the Fourth World Conference. Inter-sessional informal consultations were conducted in 1991 and 1992.

27. A vast number of varied activities relating to the status and advancement of women are being undertaken by various organizations within the United Nations system. Some of the more innovative ones are described in the paragraphs below as it would appear that the methods could be shared and built on by other international organizations, Governments and non-governmental organizations.

1. United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

28. The Women in Human Settlements Development Programme of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) has embarked on collecting a series of data beginning at the community level so as to assist policy makers in their development of appropriate policies and to provide the necessary tools to communities and non-governmental organizations in their struggle to achieve a better living and working environment. Currently, a series of workshops are being held to train teams that will carry out these baseline surveys.

29. The goal is to identify the specific vital indicators needed in order to create an awareness of trends so that appropriate adjustments can be made in project implementation, design and policy as far as women's full participation in the human settlements development process and the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 are concerned. The survey will be carried out in the following countries: Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Ghana, Sri Lanka, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. A team of 8-10 women in each country will be created, preferably half of which will consist of professional women and the other half community leaders. This team will be trained during a four-day workshop to carry out baseline surveys in the communities chosen. By asking a series of questions within four key areas (women's socio-economic status; access to services and infrastructure; shelter quality and adequacy; shelter regulation and discrimination; and women's participation), women's participation in the human settlements development process in a community at a particular time can be measured by using the indicators that have been developed.

30. This process is intended to collect data needed for the work of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) with women in human settlements, as well as to provide the community with a tool for improving their conditions and gaining recognition. By joining professional women together with women from the communities involved, it is anticipated that a more accurate picture of women's reality in the community will be obtained while simultaneously demystifying the idea that surveys can only be carried out and analysed by professionals. The community members will acquire a tool that they can use and, at the same time, they will be part of a process where they will become more aware of their own situation.

31. An ad hoc expert group meeting entitled "The Global Shelter Strategy in Action: Enhancing Women's Role in Community Development", was held by the Women in Human Settlements Development Programme at Nairobi in December 1992. The meeting provided an opportunity for two representatives from each country where the survey had been carried out to share and discuss findings and to plan further actions in developing and using indicators to measure women's participation in the human settlements development process at the national and regional levels.

32. The final objective of the Programme is to build collective and alternative visions for gender relations; to deepen the collective analysis of the context and the position of women at the local, national, regional and global levels; and to formulate particular strategies in order to effect change by developing analytical tools that the participants can use to evaluate the effects of development strategies for the promotion of women's strategic interests. The goal is to support the construction of a national network of women and men, who can connect into international networks and who are committed to developing the theory and practice of a gender-sensitive human settlements process.

2. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

33. The Policy on Refugee Women (A/AC.96/754) of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is based on the principle of mainstreaming or integration, which means that all programme planning and implementation should take the distinct needs and resources of refugee women into consideration as an essential part of basic needs assessment and programme delivery. The Policy aims at improving programmes by enhancing the

participation of refugees, particularly women, thereby contributing to their protection and to the delivery of goods and services appropriate to the differing needs of the population. In every region, progress has been made in ensuring that refugee women benefit at all stages in the delivery of assistance and protection programmes. Activities have also been undertaken to create more awareness on the part of staff and the public of the situation of refugee women.

34. The focus of implementing the Policy has evolved considerably during 1992 towards: providing practical advice and support at the field programme and project level; sharing initiatives with a view to replication in other regions; disseminating information on regional and sectoral women's issues; and providing feedback on country reports. In addition, field implementation of People-Oriented Planning (POP), the gender training course of UNHCR, has involved extensive monitoring and follow-up. This change of focus is a logical transition as the implementation of the Policy evolves from advocacy and formulation of policy and guidelines into the design and delivery of programmes and projects.

35. The two-day POP training course provides a framework for analysing the socio-economic roles of male and female refugees and their use and control of resources. It emphasizes a developmental and participatory approach, recognizing both the capacities and restrictions that may be implicit within the community structure for women, men and children. The approach of UNHCR sets store on an analysis of the needs of the whole community, with particular focus on women who are often neglected when refugee leaders are consulted on project planning. The Policy on Refugee Women and the Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women, which are an integral part (as training tools) of the implementation of the Policy have recently been redesigned as more readable and attractive documents to facilitate their use. Each mission undertaken by the Senior Coordinator for Refugee Women is used as an opportunity to demonstrate to UNHCR staff how to encourage women's participation.

3. United Nations Children's Fund

36. UNICEF is placing priority on equality of opportunity for the girl child with regard to health, nutrition, education, socio-cultural issues etc. and emphasizing the life-cycle approach for the empowerment of women.

4. United Nations Volunteers

37. The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is initiating a project to support the least developed countries in preparing for the Fourth World Conference. Initially, Botswana, Guinea and the Lao People's Democratic Republic are being targeted.

38. In recent years, UNV has been particularly effective in the areas of community-level support and capacity building. In the area of gender concerns and development, Volunteers have a special role to play in linking policy to practice at the community level, in work supporting non-governmental organizations and in mobilizing awareness at both the national and local levels. Experience has shown that some of the least developed countries face serious constraints in their ability to form national committees and to prepare national reports.

39. Mixed teams of three volunteers (an internationally recruited WID specialist, a statistician and a nationally recruited WID specialist) will serve in selected least developed countries where external assistance in support of preparatory activities is required. They will be attached to the nationally designated institution or ministry responsible for the country's preparatory activities for the Fourth World Conference. It is assumed that this institution or ministry would be the substantive ministry that could promote change in the status of women in the long term; if not, close collaboration with the national committee, when it is formed, would be even more vital.

40. The UNV team will be responsible for assisting the national institution or ministry in the following areas:

(a) Drawing up the terms of reference of the national committees and facilitating their identification, where possible ensuring the representation of non-governmental organizations, local community-based organizations, academics, locally influential women and, where they exist, veterans of former world conferences;

(b) Defining national and sectoral policies on gender issues;

(c) Establishing or improving on existing gender-disaggregated information systems, conducting gender analysis on issues and concerns pertaining to gender policies including: women's roles; participation in the economic process; and the impact of, and access to, current policies, procedures and services;

(d) Reviewing the legal structure as well as that of customary law and its impact on women, identifying key problem areas, and drawing up the terms of reference for a further study by a legal specialist where appropriate;

(e) Planning and designing promotional and conciousness-raising activities that would be supported by Governments and both men and women.

5. United Nations Development Fund for Women

41. Within UNIFEM, the Strategic Planning Workshop, held in 1992, began the process of establishing some strategic objectives for UNIFEM to pursue in preparation for the Fourth World Conference. First, UNIFEM will seek to strengthen women's networks and to facilitate their participation in regional preparatory activities for the Conference. For example, in order to continue the promotion of micro-macro linkages, the Asia-Pacific section is supporting non-governmental participation in the preparation of national reports and at the same time encouraging national Governments to broaden their base in drawing up these reports. A number of joint consultations are planned between national machinery and non-governmental organizations to define a reporting process and content that truly represents national interests.

42. Secondly, all UNIFEM regional sections are developing initiatives to support national machinery and their contribution to regional preparations for the Fourth World Conference. The Latin America/Caribbean section is collaborating with UNICEF to sponsor annual meetings of national machinery, which will promote capacity-building and foster information-sharing between countries on specific issues and alternative problem-solving programme areas. During 1993, the Africa section will review the current political context as well as the existing role of national machinery and emerging women's organizations.

Afterwards, regional consultations will be planned to bring together a constituency of gender researchers, national machinery and non-governmental organizations to identify viable structures based on broader partnerships for future agenda-setting. In Asia, UNIFEM will sponsor a regional consultation of national machinery to define and formulate strategies for dynamic and appropriate action.

43. A third focus will be to promote women's role in mainstream science and technology and to highlight their capacity for innovation. Working with associations of women scientists and engineers and with women's grass-root organizations, UNIFEM is working with a range of agencies to support a series of publications, workshops, videos and other materials, from which a "cutting edge" policy document will be compiled for the Fourth World Conference. Additionally, a series of workshops and events that feature women, science and technology are planned to be held by UNIFEM and its collaborators at the parallel NGO Forum.

44. A more detailed strategy and action plan will be drawn up by staff during the Strategic Planning Workshop to be held in May 1993. Furthermore, UNIFEM will be reviewing the agendas of other world conferences taking place between 1992 and 1995 in order to identify opportunities and mechanisms in which UNIFEM could contribute to international efforts to bring women's issues into focus. The Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations in 1995 is a main event that provides such opportunities. UNIFEM has further pledged its contribution to the updated edition of The World's Women: Trends and Statistics and is collaborating with UNDP to ensure that women's concerns are emphasized in the "Capacity 21" programme. Of major importance also are the decisions of UNDP to feature women as the main theme of the Human Development Report 1994 and the fact that UNIFEM has asked to assist in the preparation of the Report. Other activities will support advocacy for women through promotional materials, public relations and the preparation of media materials in collaboration with "Women's Feature Service", "Fempress", "Inter-Press Service" and others.

6. International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

45. With a view to the preparation of an updated edition of The World's Women: Trends and Statistics, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women is conducting substantive research in priority areas such as violence against women, elderly women and women's contribution to the economy.

7. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

46. A working group on WID is sensitizing all technical divisions of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to the need for a gender approach, particularly with a view to preparations for the Fourth World Conference. Progress on how WID is being incorporated into projects and programmes will be assessed and reported.

8. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

47. A task force on preparations for the Fourth World Conference is being established by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to ensure an integrated approach. The national committees are very active.

9. United Nations Industrial Development Organization

48. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is focusing on women's involvement and role in the economy, especially industry, at the regional level. The role of women in ecologically sound and sustainable development is also a recent priority.

10. International Fund for Agricultural Development

49. The first meeting of representatives of the International Steering Committee on follow-up to the Summit on the Economic Advancement of Rural Women was organized from 13 to 14 October 1992 under the auspices of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The meeting was concerned with the channel to be used for providing input to the Fourth World Conference, either through the Government, through a report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations or through another United Nations body.

11. International Trade Centre (UNCTAD/GATT)

50. Working together with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the Centre will also support national machinery for the advancement of women and plans to hold regional workshops to sensitize national machinery to trade issues and to expand policy dialogue down to the grass roots.

E. Intergovernmental activities

1. Council of Europe

51. At its second meeting, held in June 1992, the Committee for Equality Between Women and Men of the Council of Europe decided to hold a special meeting in 1994 on preparations for the Fourth World Conference. This subject was also placed on the agenda of the committee's third meeting, held in Turkey in October 1992, and the secretariat of the Conference was invited to brief the meeting on the preparations under way.

2. Commission of the European Communities

52. The Commission of the European Communities together with the European Network "Women in Decision Making", in cooperation with the European Women's Lobby, held a European Summit entitled "Women in Power" in November 1992. A Declaration was adopted by the high-level women politicians who participated. The issue of power as a means of changing the structure of politics to achieve real equality seemed to emerge as one of the principal themes for the Fourth World Conference.

3. Nordic Council

53. The Nordic Council of Ministers is planning a Nordic Forum to be held in Finland from 1 to 6 August 1994. The objectives of the Forum, which is open to all, organizations, groups and individuals alike, are to follow up the development of equality since Nordic Forum 1988; to inspire those working with equality issues; to encourage future activities; to show visions of women and men in connection with attaining equality in society by the year 2000 by focusing on certain themes; to create connections across boundaries between women and women's organizations in the Nordic countries and the nearby regions

in Eastern Europe; to inspire new groups in equality work at the national and Nordic levels; to inspire young people to work for equality actively; to strengthen the extensive interest in equality issues; and to prepare the participation of Nordic countries in the Fourth World Conference. A preparatory seminar held from 23 to 25 October 1992 was attended by parliamentarians and many representatives of non-governmental organizations in the Nordic and Baltic regions. They discussed the structure of the NGO Forum to be held parallel to the Fourth World Conference: cooperation with the United Nations and the preparations of the non-governmental organizations themselves.

F. Non-governmental organizations

54. The Planning Committee responsible for preparing the NGO Forum in 1995 as well as for coordinating the contributions of non-governmental organizations to the Fourth World Conference comprises 57 international organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. The Steering Committee comprises a Convenor, a Coordinator, the Chairs of the Geneva, New York and Vienna NGO Committees on Women, the Chair of the Conference of Non-governmental Organizations in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (CONGO), a representative of the All China Women's Federation, spokespersons of regional networks and of groups concerned with the media, fund-raising and computer communications. International non-governmental consultations will be held each year prior to the sessions of the Commission to initiate, guide and coordinate the regional preparations and activities of individual organizations. The nomination of very visible, high-level patrons has been recommended.

55. International non-governmental organizations have been requested to contact their national affiliates so that they may establish national coalitions and define national priorities. Such activities should lead to the involvement of those organizations that are participating in national appraisal processes, contributing to national reports and feeding the national concerns of non-governmental organizations into the regional preparatory process. Contact has been established with the All China Women's Federation. Studies are being undertaken in various circles to identify the real concerns of women and the obstacles they encounter to their advancement. A questionnaire has been circulated to the international non-governmental organizations that is also applicable to local use.

56. At the regional level, contacts have been made with the regional commissions and some representatives of non-governmental organizations have been identified to coordinate activities. Groups of representatives of non-governmental organizations are being formed in most of the cities of the regional commissions for coordination purposes as well as to establish regional networks and prepare for the regional forums. A regional NGO conference, including grass-root women will be convened by ESCAP late in 1993 so that the results can be made available to the regional preparatory meeting in May 1994. Non-governmental organizations have started planning for a European Forum, although there is no mandate as yet for an official regional preparatory conference. Office space will be required, especially as eight computers have been donated, which will be located in the five regional headquarters as well as in Beijing, New York and Vienna. In Addis Ababa, ATRCW has promised to provide office space. It has also been recommended that representatives of non-governmental organizations working in the locations of the regional preparatory conferences should be mobilized to network within the region in preparation for the conference.

57. In addition to the centralized activities of the Planning Committee, it is understood that some non-governmental organizations are becoming very active in their own preparations for 1995. In some countries, representatives of non-governmental organizations are participating in the national committee. Some non-governmental organizations have informed the Secretariat of specific individual plans. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is establishing a group of six women and six men representing all regions to elaborate a plan of action to remedy the current imbalance in the participation of men and women in political life. It is hoped that this group will meet during the meeting of women parliamentarians to be held by IPU at New Delhi from 12 to 16 April 1993. The United Nations-Non-Governmental Group on Women and Development, within their publishing programme, plan to issue a new book towards the end of 1993 entitled "Women, participation and decision-making" targeted on the preparations for the Fourth World Conference.

II. ORGANIZATION OF THE CONFERENCE

58. The General Assembly, in its resolution 47/95 on the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies, recommended that the Commission should consider at its thirty-seventh session the relevance to the Fourth World Conference of the resolutions drafted at the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, held at Nairobi, in order to avoid duplication of work, keeping in mind that those resolutions were neither adopted by the Conference nor considered by the General Assembly. Eighty-five resolutions were drafted at the Nairobi World Conference 2/ but no action was taken on any of them owing to the lack of time on the one hand and the comprehensive nature of the Forward-looking Strategies, which covered the concerns of Member States, on the other. Preparations for the Fourth World Conference have been made, however, on the assumption that resolutions will emanate from it and provision has therefore been made for two working groups to meet simultaneously in addition to the meetings in plenary.

59. All preparatory activities undertaken at the national, regional and international levels that are brought to the attention of the secretariat of the Conference will be publicized in Conference 95. The first issue of this biannual publication is scheduled for mid-1993 and will appear in the six official languages of the United Nations.

60. A statement of programme budget implications (E/1992/24/Add.2) containing the full estimates, which had been prepared in response to Commission resolution 36/8, section D, paragraph 1, was presented to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1992. The implications of the decisions of the Economic and Social Council were considered by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. Most of the resources required for the Conference will be included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995.

61. The Division for the Advancement of Women, acting as the secretariat for the Conference, is in contact with the Women in Development Bureau of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, which has appointed a special Coordinator for the Fourth World Conference. Informal consultations between the DAC/WID Bureau and members of the inter-agency meeting on women are being scheduled to coincide with the thirty-seventh session of the Commission.

62. The Conference secretariat is also in contact with the Ford Foundation and other non-governmental institutions that contributed to the preparations for previous world conferences.

63. In his note verbale of 12 August 1992 to all Member States and permanent observers, the Secretary-General drew attention to the trust fund that he had established in February 1992 for the purpose of funding preparatory activities for the Fourth World Conference at the national, regional and international levels and invited contributions to be made. Contributions from Belgium, Canada and Finland to this trust fund have already been assured.

Note

1/ Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, Kenya, 15-26 July 1985 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

2/ Ibid., annex I.

Annex

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

1993

15-16 March	NGO Planning Committee Consultations, Vienna
15-16 March	Sixteenth Inter-Agency Meeting on Women, Vienna
17-26 March	Commission on the Status of Women, thirty-seventh session, Vienna
April	ECA/ATRCW/ARCC and ECA Conference of Ministers, Harare
May	Regional Expert Group Meeting on African Plan of Action, Addis Ababa
May	UNIFEM Strategic Planning Workshop
May (or June)	Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference, Caracas
9-25 June	World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna
June	First issue of Conference 95
13-17 September	Expert Group Meeting on Measures to Eradicate Violence against Women in the Family and Society, Vienna
8-12 November	Expert Group Meeting on Women in Urban Areas, Population, Nutrition and Health Factors for Women in Development, including Migration, Drug Consumption and AIDS, Vienna
November	Asian Regional NGO Workshop on WID
November	Meeting of Presiding Officers of the Latin American Regional Preparatory Conference, Santiago
December	Second issue of Conference 95
Late in year	Regional Expert Group Meeting on Western Asian Plan of Action
Late in year	Publication of the United Nations-Non-Governmental Organization Group's book: Women, Participation and Decision-making

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February (or May)	Regional Expert Group Meeting on African Plan of Action and Round-Table Encounter, Tunisia
March	Seventeenth Inter-Agency Meeting on Women
March	NGO Planning Committee Consultations

March	Commission on the Status of Women, thirty-eighth session, Vienna
May	Asian regional preparatory conference, Indonesia
1-6 August	Nordic Forum, Turku, Finland
5-13 September	International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo
September	Latin American regional preparatory conference, Argentina
September/October	African regional preparatory conference, Senegal
November	Western Asian regional preparatory conference
During year	Committee on Equality between Women and Men, Council of Europe